Research Notes for Charles Henry Rook / Roach (1822 - 1901)

Research Overview:

Charles Rook, later known as Charles Henry Roach, appears at a point where identity, place, and even name are changing, and the records capture the change but not the reasons behind it. Born in England in 1822, he emigrated to Canada and settled in Ontario, where his surname shifted from Rook to Roach. As this new identity takes hold, his earlier life in England—including his military service—recedes from view, while later records focus more clearly on his role as a husband, father, and laborer in Canada.

In Canada, Charles's life becomes organized around steady work. Coming from poverty in England, he appears repeatedly over decades as a railroad laborer and section foreman, a role that provided consistent employment and anchored his household. Charles married Eleanor, a widow, who had an infant daughter still nursing and a toddler son. The record does not preserve how they met or what led to the marriage, only that Charles entered an already formed household and provided for them. Canadian census records trace their growing family, but no marriage record or baptismal records for any of the children have been found.

In later life, Charles's death is recorded, but the surrounding circumstances are sparse, offering little insight into illness, dependency, or how his working life ended. He is buried next to his wife, without a gravestone. Charles's name was repeatedly passed on, with all of his children and stepchildren giving one of their children his name.

Timeline

22 Aug 1822– Born at Sheldwich, Kent, England.[1]

R Pinnell has two sources that indicate CHR was born on 22 Aug 1823. One source is the handwritten (by RP's grandfather) family tree he sent me as an email attachment. The other is a burial register of Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Petersburg.

"I visited that church many years ago and recorded the entry for the burial of Charles Roach. It indicates he was born on 22 Aug 1823 in Kent County, England." R Pinnell

22 Sep 1822 – Baptized at Kent, England.[2]

6 Mar 1825 - Birth of sister Rebecca Rook (1825 - 1886) at Sheldwich, Kent, England.[3]

24 Sep 1826 - Death of half-brother Daniel Rook (1803 - 1826) at Sheldwich, Kent, England.[4]

14 Dec 1828 - Birth of brother George Rook (1828 -) at Sheldwich, Kent, England.[5]

Jun 1837 - Death of half-sister Elizabeth Rook (1815 - 1837) at Sheldwich, Kent, England.[6]

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[1] Baptismal record from County Kent

[2] Baptismal record from County Kent

[3] England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index, 1837-1915,Rebecca Rook and Baptismal record for sister Rebecca Rook from County Kent

[4] "Find a Grave Index," database, *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QL7T-2YJZ: 9 June 2021), Daniel Rook, ; Burial, Sheldwich, Swale Borough, Kent, England, St James Churchyard; citing record ID 178029529, *Find a Grave*, http://www.findagrave.com.

[5] Sheldwich St. James parish, Sheldwich, Kent, England, Baptisms, 1813 - 1856, p.36, no. 283, George Rook, 1825; Canterbury Cathedral Archives, U3/186/1/3; FHL microfilm 2354740 item 5.

[6] "Find a Grave Index," database, *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QL75-PTQK: 16 December 2020), Elizabeth Rook Webb, ; Burial, Sheldwich, Swale Borough, Kent, England, St James Churchyard; citing record ID 178044277, *Find a Grave*, http://www.findagrave.com.

1841- England Census at St. George The Martyr, Kent, England.[7]

Charles Rook, 20

Margaret Rook, 30

It is possible that this is not my family.

1842 - Military The other Charles Rook. Samuel Rock was in this regiment, born in a different county and on an earlier date. See this document.[8]

1851 - Military This record is from Private Charles Rock, born in 1819 and discharged at age 32. He was born in Stenstone, Stafford, and enlisted in the 66th Regiment of Foot in 1842, the same unit as my Charles Henry Rook.[9]

1855 - Arrival in Canada.[10]
Charles was discharged from the English Army 66th Foot Regiment in Toronto, Canada.

c. 1855 - Marriage – Charles and Eleanor appear as a married couple in Canada.

No marriage record has been identified. Eleanor had two young children from a prior relationship.[11]

1855 - Death of father Samuel Rook (1771 - 1855) at Sheldwich, Kent, England.[12]

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[7] 1841 England Census, Not sure if this is my Charles H. Rook

[8] The National Archives of the UK; Kew, Surrey, England; Royal Hospital Chelsea: Soldiers Service Documents; Series: WO 97; Piece Number: 796. Not the correct Charles Rook - It's Charles Rock

[9] Discharged from the English Army 66th Foot in Toronto, Canada. There won't be any immigration papers

[10] "British Army Service Records," Chas. Rook entry database, FindMyPast; citing The National Archives, WO22 Royal Hospital Chelsea: Returns of Payment of Army and Other Pensions 1842 - 1883, piece 240, Canada, 1849 - 1854, 66th Foot, page 197.

[11] Estimated date based on birth of first child

[12] Sheldwich St. James Parish, Sheldwich, Kent, England, Burials, 1813 - 1895, p.48, no. 382, Samuel Rook, 1855; Canterbury Cathedral Archives, U3/186/1/13; FHL microfilm 2354740 item 15.

By this point, Charles is consistently recorded under the surname Roach, rather than Rook.

No baptismal records have been identified for any of the children, despite their repeated appearance in census records.

Birth of daughter Sarah Elizabeth Roach (1857 - 1911) at Berlin, Ontario, Canada.[13]

SARAH ELIZABETH ROACH was born on 8 January 1857 in Berlin, Ontario, Canada, and married on 1 July 1878 in Stratford, Ontario, Canada, THOMAS THOMSON. She died on 15 June 1911 in Grand Rapids, Kent, Michigan.

Birth of son Charles Henry Roach (1860 - 1927) at Waterloo, Ontario, Canada [14]

CHARLES HENRY ROACH was born on 13 November 1860 in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, and married MAGDALENA BAYER on 31 March 1885 in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. He died on 5 March 1927 in Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada.

Oct 1861 - Death of mother Sarah Cox (1784 – 1861) at Sheldwich, Kent, England.[15]

Eleanor's two children from a prior relationship are enumerated in the household as Charles's stepchildren, though they are listed with the surname Roach in this census despite later records showing they used their biological father's surname, Cornell.

[13] USA Death Registration, State of Michigan #880, states that Sarah Elizabeth Roach was born 8 January 1857 in Canada

[14] Birth of son Charles Henry Roach see "Canada, Ontario Deaths, 1869-1937 and Overseas Deaths, 1939-1947", , *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:JKWK-4ZZ: Tue Jul 16 06:39:41 UTC 2024), Entry for Charles Roach and Charles Roach, 05 Mar 1927.

[15] Sheldwich St. James Parish, Sheldwich, Kent, England, Burials, 1813 - 1895, p.48, no. 382, Sarah Rook, 1855; Canterbury Cathedral Archives, U3/186/1/13; FHL microfilm 2354740 item 15.

1861- Census of Canada at Ontario, Canada.[16]

Charles Roach, 36

Elinor Roach, 23

William F Roach, 6

Elinor Ann Roach, 5

No records were known for Charles Roach or his wife, Ellen Delaney, before 1861.

This marks the beginning of decades of steady employment with the railroad.

Birth of daughter Mary Margaret Roach (1862 - 1919)

MARY MARGARET ROACH was born in 1862 in Minden or Thorndale, Hamilton, Ontario,67 and died on 4 May 1919 in Timiskaming, Ontario, Canada.68 She married on 2 March 1877 in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, LOUIS BEILSTEIN.69 Louis was born in 1865 in Ontario to Philip Beilstein and Johnetta Peters,70 and died on 12 May 1949.

Birth of son George Walter Roach (1863 - 1924)

GEORGE WALTER ROACH was born in September 1863 in Thorndale, Ontario, Canada, and married on 17 October 1883 in Amulree, North Easthope, Perth County, Ontario, Canada, ANNA ELIZABETH KRUG. He died on 13 July 1924 in York, Ontario, Canada.

1871- Census of Canada at Ontario, Canada.[17]

Charles Roach, 46

Elinar Roach, 49

[16] "Canada Census, 1861", , *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:M4QT-17M: Fri Mar 08 08:43:51 UTC 2024), Entry for Charles Roach

[17] "Canada Census, 1871", , *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:M4QT-17M: Fri Mar 08 08:43:51 UTC 2024), Entry for Charles Roach and Elinar Roach, 1871.

William F Roach, 17

Elinar Roach, 16

Sarah Roach, 14

Charles H Roach, 12

Maria M Roach, 9

George W Roach, 7

Samuel Roach, 6

Death of sister Matilda Rook (1820 - 1880) at Ospringe, Kent, England. [18]

1881- Census of Canada at Ontario, Canada.[19]

Charles Roach, 57

Ellen Roach, 47

Charles H Roach, 21

Mary Roach, 19

George Roach, 17

Samuel Roach, 6

[18] Ospringe, SS Peter and Paul, Ospringe, Kent, England, Burials, 1880 - 1916, p.3, no. 19, Matilda Shilling entry; digital image, "Canterbury Burials," FindMyPast; citing Kent, Canterbury Archdeaconry Burials 1538 - 1988, U3/123/1/15

[19] "Canada Census, 1881", , *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MVDZ-VBV: Sat Mar 09 12:23:04 UTC 2024), Entry for Charles Roach and Ellen Roach, 1881.

4 Nov 1884 - Death of brother Stephen Rook (1813 - 1884) at Erith, Kent, England.[20]

Birth of son George Walter Roach (1865 - 1936)

SAMUEL JAMES ROACH was born on 29 May 1865 in Thorndale, Ontario, Canada, and married on 23 May 1893, in Grand Rapids, Kent, Michigan, MARY ELLEN MCEVOY. He died on 12 May 1936 in Grand Rapids.

12 May 1886 - Death of wife Ellen Delaney / Lane (1837-1886) at Petersburg, Ontario, Canada.[21]

8 Dec 1886 - Death of sister Rebecca Rook (1825–1886) at Snelling, Kent, England.

Sep 1890 - Death of sister Sarah Rook (1818 - 1890) Faversham, Kent, England.

1891- Census of Canada at Wilmont, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada.[22]

Charles Roach, 31

Lena Roach, 30

Charles Roach, 5

William Roach, 3

Charles Roach, 67

Lizzie Beyer, 25

[20] At 5 Victoria Street Belvedere. Erith, St. John the Baptist, Erith, Kent, England, Burials, 1875 - 1886, p. 168, no 1340, Stephen Rook, 1884; digital Image. Ancestry citing "church of England Parish Registers 1813 - 1985,"

[21] Death of Ellen Elenore Roach, 12 May 1886, No. 018143; Archives of Ontario; Series: MS935; Reel: 45, Ancestry.com Ontario, Canada, Deaths, 1869 - 1938

[22] 1891 Census of Canada; Birth date: abt 1824 Birth place: England Residence date: 1891 Residence place: Waterloo South, Ontario, Canada

3 Oct 1901 - Death at Petersburg, Ontario, Canada.[23]

Details surrounding his death are limited.

Oct 1901 - Burial at Emmanuel Lutheran Church Cemetery in Petersburg, Ontario, Canada.[24]

Charles was buried beside his wife, without a gravestone.

[23] Death of Charles Henry Roach, 3 October 1901, No. 28119, Archives of Ontario; Series: MS935 Reel 104; Ancestry.com. Ontario, Canada, Deaths 1869 - 1938. "Gestorben,"The Berliner Journal, Berlin [Kitchener,] Ontario, vol. 42, no 41, Thursday, 1o October 1910, page 5, column 3, Charles H. Roach death notice.

[24] "Find a Grave Index," database, *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QV2Y-5LRK: 13 June 2023), Charles Henry Roach, ; Burial, Petersburg, Waterloo Regional Municipality, Ontario, Canada, Emmanuel Lutheran Cemetery; citing record ID 80316138, *Find a Grave*, http://www.findagrave.com.

Appendix:

Timeline of Events for the Charles Roach Family

Timeline of Events for the Charles Roach Family

Date	Place	Event
1822 Aug 22	Sheldwich, Kent Co., England	Baptism of Charles Rook
1837 Sep 28	Toronto, Ontario, Canada	Birth of Ellen Lane
1841	Gosport, England	Charles Rook serves in British Army's 66th Regiment of Foot
1851	Barbados, West Indies	Charles Rook serves in British Army's 66th Regiment of Foot
1853 Mar 24	Dumfries, Ontario, Canada	Ellen Delaney/Lane marries John Cornell
1854	Eastern Canada	Charles Rook musters out of the 66th Regiment of Foot.
1854 Aug 7	Copetown, Wentworth Co., Canada	William Francis Cornell reportedly born
1855 circa	Ontario, Canada	Death of John Cornell
1855 Aug 19	Copetown, Wentworth Co., Ontario (or Thorndale, Middlesex Co. Ontario)	Eleanor "Ellenor" Anne Cornell born
1855 circa	Ontario, Canada	Charles Henry Roach marries Ellen (Lane) Cornell
1857 Jan 8	Canada	Sarah Elizabeth Roach born
1860 Nov 13	Ontario, Canada	Charles Henry Roach, Jr., born

14 Aug 1861	Nissouri West Twp., Middlesex Co., Ontario, Canada West	Charles Roach household listed on census with Charles working as section foreman for the Grand Trunk Railway
1862 circa	Ontario, Canada, likely Middlesex Co.	Mary Margaret Roach born
1863 Sep 6	Thorndale, Middlesex Co., Ontario, Canada	George Walter Roach born
1865 May 29	Thorndale, Middlesex Co., Ontario, Canada	Samuel James Roach born
1867	Wilmot Twp., Waterloo Co., Ontario, Canada	Charles Roach, foreman, Grand Trunk Railway, in a directory
1871	Wilmot Twp., Waterloo Co., Ontario, Canada	Charles Roach household listed on census
1881	Wilmot Twp., Waterloo Co., Ontario, Canada	Charles Roach household listed on census
1886 May 12	Waterloo Co., Ontario, Canada	Death of Ellen (Lane) (Cornell) Roach
1891	Wilmot Twp., Waterloo Co., Ontario, Canada	Charles Roach, Jr., household listed on census
1901 Oct 3	Wilmot Div., Waterloo Co., Ontario, Canada	Death of Charles Henry Roach at 78 years, 1 month, 11 days

CHARLES HENRY ROOK, son of Samuel and Sarah (Cox) Rook, was born on 22 August 1822 in Sheldwich, Kent, England.51 He died on 3 October 1901 in Wilmot Township, Waterloo, Ontario.52

Charles married **ELLEN LANE** circa 1855. "A marriage record has not been found for Charles and Ellen Roach. At the time of their marriage, Ellen was the widow of John Cornell and the mother of John's children, William and Eleanor Cornell."53 Ellen was born on 28 September 1837 in Copetown, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, and died on 12 May 1886 in Petersburg, Wilmot Township, Waterloo, Ontario. 54 She was buried in May 1886 at Emmanuel Lutheran Church Cemetery in Petersburg. Ellen married first JOHN CORNELL on 24 March 1853 at the Wesleyan Parsonage in Dumfries Township, Ontario, Canada. Reverend F. Berry, a traveling minister, performed the marriage. John was born on 24 March 1835 in Dumfries and died in 1855.56. According to the newspaper account of her first marriage, in 1853, she lived in Copetown, a small community in Beverly Township, Wentworth County.57 No record of Ellen has been found before her marriage.58 The newspaper account for her first marriage recorded her surname as Delaney, but no other record has been found for Ellen using this surname.

Charles Rook served in the British Army's 66th Regiment of Foot in 1841 in Gosport, England. 59 The 66th Regiment of Foot was in Canada in 1840 and later was sent to Gibraltar in July 1845 and then to the West Indies in 1848.60 Charles was listed as serving in the regiment in 1851 while in Barbados, West Indies.61 The Regiment was sent back to Canada in 1851, and soldiers were stationed in Toronto, Montreal, and Quebec.62 Charles retired soon after and received a gratuity of £10.63 "Charles Rook's retirement from the military is right about when Charles Henry Roach appears in Canada and marries Ellen Lane. It may be that

After several years in the military service, the last three years in Canada, Charles decided to stay in Canada, where he may have felt there were more opportunities for him."64

The military records, combined with DNA matches for Mary Beth Mueller and other family members provide strong evidence that Charles Rook was the same Charles Henry Roach who married Ellen Lane.65

Charles, now known as Charles Roach, worked as a section foreman for the

Grand Trunk Railway in Canada. For a period of time, the Roach family lived in Berlin (now Kitchener) around 1857 and then in Thorndale, a village between London and Stratford in Ontario in the early 1860s. Charles was one of the first section foremen in Thorndale, and the family was one of the early families associated with St. George's Anglican Church in Thorndale.66 According to the 1861 Census of Canada, the family lived in a one-story frame house in Thorndale. Charles was a member of the Church of England, while the four children were Wesleyan Methodists. Between 1865 and 1867, the family moved to Petersburg in Wilmot Township, where Charles also worked as a section foreman for the Grand Trunk Railway. When the family was enumerated on the 1871 Census of Canada in Petersburg all the family were members of the Anglican Church but attended the local Emmanuel Lutheran Church.